A SERMON AGAINST BRIBERY.

Preach'd *July* 8. 1695.

IN THE

Cathedral-Church

OF

St. *PETER* in *YORK*:

Before the Right Honourable

Mr. Juſtice *NEVILL*,

AND

Baron *TURTON*

By *NATH. DRAKE*, M. A. and Vicar of *Weighton*.

LONDON,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Biſhop's-Head* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, and *Francis Hildyard*, Bookſeller in *York*, 1695.

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To the Honourable

INGLEBY DANIEL, Esq;

HIGH-SHERIFF

OF THE

County of *YORK*.

SIR,

SINCE it was Your Pleasure that this Sermon shou'd be made publick, and expos'd to the Censures of a Critical Age, the humble Author (tho' pretty safe in his own Obscurity) is desirous to take Shelter under Your Illustrious Name, and thinks it but reasonable that the just Authority You have over him, shou'd be responsible for all the hazardous Consequents of such an Undertaking.

There are Others, indeed, whose Importunity help'd to push me forward to this Adventure, looking upon the Argument as (but too) seasonable, and therefore likely to do Good at this Juncture.

I wish

I wish it may answer the Design of it, which every Good Man will allow to be Just and Honest: But if the Management (which is only to be fear'd) proves tame and defective, then Your Friendship, SIR, and Theirs, must be blam'd, for setting an over-value upon this Composure.

It will probably be thought one Defect in this Discourse, That having insisted too much upon the Historical part *of my* Subject, *I have not drawn out the Applications to a* due length, *but have spent more time in* raising *and exposing old* Jewish Ghosts, *than in* laying *those* Evil Spirits *which the Magick of* Money *has rais'd in our* own Land. *But tho'* Jerusalem *be the* Scene, *and* Israel *the* Actors *in this Wicked Conspiracy, yet the like corrupt Practices being every Day detected, and so publickly known among us, I presently concluded that my Animadversions upon the* Text, *being an unparall'd Instance of* Bribery, *wou'd with ease be extended to reach all Corruptions of like Complexion, and thereby supersede many Particulars in the point of* Application.

I'm sorry that Discourses of this Nature shou'd be Licens'd and made necessary by publick Scandals, and crying Abuses: But when

it

it is obvious to what Shrine *ſome Men ſacrifice their Conſciences; when we hear of* Private Purſes *unjuſtly fill'd, and the* Publick Exchequer *much exhauſted and drein'd by a ſecret* Diabetic *Paſſion. In a Word; When we ſee what ſervile and inglorious Practices this Nation muſt ſoon have groan'd under, if they had not been happily diſcover'd, every conſidering honeſt Man will ſo far claim Privilege to be his own Repreſentative, as to put in his* Vote, That *thoſe* felonious Gluttons *who have fed upon the* Publick Treaſury, *or eaten the* Children's Bread, *be made to* diſgorge *all again, till they have paid back the* very laſt Mite.

But we have reaſon to bleſs God that there was Virtue *enough left in the* Fountain *to purge it ſelf; and it is to be hoped that* Men *hereafter will be afraid of that* Rock *on which ſo many have ſplit of late, while* both Houſes *in a commendable Zeal took up Arms againſt* Solomon's Men of Oblations, *as well the Givers as the Receivers of* Bribes, *by whoſe Baſeneſs the poor Country might otherwiſe have been ſoon* Bought and Sold *into extream Penury and Slavery.*

And, indeed, it is to be wiſh'd, that all other Magiſtrates, as they love their Country,

try, wou'd ſtrike while the Iron is hot, *leſt Iniquity at laſt prevail by Cuſtom, and plead Preſcription.*

But I forbear, —— *not that I think that theſe treacherous* Under-hand-Dealers *can be too much expos'd to popular Scorn and Deriſion. But leſt this provoking Subject tranſport me unto any* Indecent Warmths, *which yet I think more pardonable in this Caſe than a* fatal Tenderneſs *and* Forbearance. *I will add no more, but that I glory in hereby publiſhing my ſelf,*

SIR,

Your moſt Obedient,

and Obliged Servant,

Nath. Drake.

St.

St. Matth. xxviii. 15.

So they took the Money, and did as they were taught. -----

IT is a juſt Obſervation which the Wiſe King *Solomon* has left us in his excellent Book of *Proverbs*; *The king by judgment ſtabliſheth the land, but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.* The former of which *Propoſitions* is a moſt approved Truth, confirmed by the joint Suffrages and Experience of all Nations, *viz.* That the Sovereign Exerciſe of Juſtice and impartial Execution of Good Laws, is, (under God) the firmeſt eſtabliſhment of a Kingdom, and the beſt ſecurity of any Government.

This then being taken for granted, it follows neceſſarily, That whatſoever perverteth the Courſe of Juſtice, is deſtructive of Government. And herein lies the reaſon of the following *Disjunction*, which is full and pertinent, *But he that receiveth gifts overthroweth the land*; the Argument of which, in due Syllogiſtical Form, runs thus: ——

That which corrupteth Judgment, which is the *Pillar and Ground* of the Government, overthroweth the Land;

But Unjuſt Gifts, or Bribes corrupt Judgment,

Therefore he that receiveth thoſe Gifts overthroweth the Land. -- κατασκάπτει, he digs away the Groundwork, he ſhakes the very Pillars of it; tho' at preſent

ſent he makes no open diſcernable Breach in the Government, yet as a *Secret Enemy*, he undermines the main Foundation, he corrupts *Juſtice*, the ſteady Support of the *State*, and perverteth *Truth*, the grand Pillar of the *Church*, and Worm-eats the Planks of that Veſſel wherein the Safety of both is embark'd.

Nor does Truth and Juſtice ſuffer leſs by the *Giver* than by the *Receiver* of Bribes; he is the *Vir Oblationum* here as well as the other, and, as the *Seventy* render it, is ἀνὴρ ἄδικος, a Violator of the Laws in this Caſe, as well as he that does the *Accurſed Drudgery* for the Reward of Iniquity.

Now at a Seaſon when we have *Enemies abroad*, that watch all Opportunities to overthrow our Land, it ſeems more eſpecially neceſſary that the Government ſhould have an Eye upon theſe treacherous *Miners within*, who for love of Money, or thro' deſperate Malice, are digging Graves for Us and themſelves, and doing the Enemy's Work: For how ſhall our Citadel bear the Shock of *Foreigners*, if it be undermin'd by our *Own* treacherous Hands.

Our Royal Maſter (whom God preſerve and proſper) is gone to put a Stop to the Advances of our Foreign Enemies, and has left his Adminiſtrators of Juſtice, the *Honourable Judges of this Realm*, to ſtabliſh the Land by Judgment, to tye thoſe *Treacherous Hands* that wou'd overturn it, as well the malicious *Buyers of a Lye*, as the Mercenary *Sellers of Truth*, who ſacrifice Laws and Liberties, Truth and Equity, Church and State to their covetous or malicious Luſts.

Now

Now Enemies ought to be regarded chiefly in proportion to their Power: Little Adverſaries, and low-deſigning Traytors may be ſlighted and over-look'd, but it muſt be a very ſleepy or corrupt Government which does not ſearch and examine narrowly into this *Old Exchange*, which in every Age and Nation, has been ſet up and manag'd by the Father of Lies and his Agents, to the great Prejudice of Truth, and Obſtruction of Juſtice.

Now that you may ſee what bold deſperate *Attempts* may be made with *Money*, and conſequently how that *ſecret Spring* of Miſchief ought to be guarded, I have at this time pitch'd upon the higheſt and moſt daring Inſtance of Subornation and Bribery, that ever was *recorded* in Hiſtory, or *acted* upon any Theatre in the World.

The *Matter of Fact* is faithfully recorded by St. *Matthew* to this Effect.

The inhuman *Jews* having proſecuted the Holy *JESUS* to Death, with a falſe ſhew of Juſtice, reſt not there, but their *Chief Prieſts* and *Phariſees* go *in a Body* to *Pilate*, the *Roman* Judge, from whom they had extorted the *Bloody Sentence*, and addreſs him thus;

"*Sir*, We remember that *That Deceiver* ſaid, "while he was yet alive, *After three days I will* "*riſe again*; therefore to prevent any further Se- "duction of the People, be pleas'd to command "that the Sepulchre be made ſure, until the Third "Day, leſt his Diſciples come by Night, and ſteal "him away, and ſay unto the People, *He is riſen*

"*from the dead*; ſo the laſt Error or Impoſture "ſhall be worſe than the firſt.

Pilate grants their Requeſt, bids 'em ſatisfie themſelves in every Particular, tells 'em they had a *Guard* of *Roman Soldiers* at their Service, and leaves them to uſe all means they cou'd deviſe to ſecure the crucify'd Body in the Grave.

So they reſolving to make *ſure Work* of it, and, if poſſible, to out do the Tyranny of Death, ſeal'd the *Sepulchre*, and, as an Ancient Tradition ſays, bound it about with Labels of Iron, and gave ſuch ſtrict charge to the Soldiers, as if they had intended to have made it ſurer than the Decrees of Fate, or the uncontroll'd Laws of Nature.

Beda de locis ſanctis. cap. 2.

Thus the Watch is ſet, and a maſſy Stone roll'd to the Door of the Sepulchre, to keep the *King of Glory* in *Chains*, and the *Lord of Life* in the *Bands of Death*.

But *He that ſitteth in Heaven* laugh'd theſe Wretches to ſcorn; not all their Malicious Contrivances, in conjunction with Hell and the Grave, cou'd hold him there, where God had a ſtronger *Guard* than theſe Conſpirators, for the Angels deſcended *Guardians* of the Sepulchre; and on the Third Day, to the confuſion and Aſtoniſhment of the *Roman Garriſon*, all the Bands and Bars of Death are broken up, the mighty Blockade removed, and the Priſon Doors open'd with Triumph to make way for the *King of Glory*.

And farther, ſuch was the Power of our Lord's Reſurrection, that it not only made the *Stone* give *way*, but the Angelick Lightning even pierc'd the *Stony Hearts* of the Soldiers, and forc'd 'em to make

make a Confeſſion to the Chief Prieſts of *all the things that were done*; but they, reſolving to perſiſt in their Iniquity, and to render it ſafe and unqueſtionable by a *new Crime*, (to ſtrengthen their impotent ineffective Malice) betake themſelves to *Money*, the uſual *Aqua vitæ*, as one calls it, *of fainting cauſes*; with this they hire the Soldiers to tell a moſt incredible Lye, *viz. That the Diſciples came by night, and ſtole the body away while they ſlept.* A Monſtrous Abſurdity! But the greedy *Penſioners*, regarding nothing but the Reward, *took the money, and did as they were taught.*

This Hiſtorical Account, which our Evangeliſt gives of this Matter, is ſufficiently confirm'd by other Hiſtorians of unqueſtionable Credit, as we ſhall ſee hereafter.

But at preſent, that we may ſee more diſtinctly what inveterate Malice, and ſlaviſh Avarice, when *Covenanted* together can do, our Inqueſt ſhall be accountable for theſe *Four* Things.

I. Why, or to what End was this Money given and receiv'd?
II. Who they were that gave and receiv'd it?
III. What Reward was given?
IV. How the Bargain was perform'd?

Of theſe in their Order, with a Deduction of ſuch *Inferences* as I judge applicable to this Occaſion; and all with that Brevity as ſhall ſhew my humble Regard to your Patience, and to your Buſineſs.

The

I The *Firſt* Article of Enquiry is, Why, or to what End was this Money given and receiv'd?

To the baſeſt Ends and Purpoſes imaginable, to ſtifle Truth, and ſubſtitute a Lye in the room of it. It was given to baffle the cleareſt Evidence of Chriſt's Reſurrection; it was receiv'd to bear falſe Witneſs againſt a moſt apparent and undiſguis'd Truth: And more than that, it was both given and receiv'd, not only to Eclipſe the Light of the *Truth*, but to foiſt in a prodigious Deviliſh *Lye*.

A *Lye* moſt *Maliciouſly* laid againſt the *Capital Article* of our Religion, being deſign'd to *behead Chriſtianity* at a Blow.

A *Lye* moſt *Ungratefully* Wicked, carry'd on by Suborning Witneſſes with the *price of Iniquity*, againſt *Him* who had purchaſed their Redemption with the *price of his Blood*.

A *Lye* moſt notoriouſly *Impudent*, made by thoſe who *gave* the Money, and known to be ſo by thoſe who *receiv'd* it, being hired to contradict their own Depoſitions, and forſwear themſelves as often as they were call'd to it.

But withal, one of the *groſſeſt and worſt-contriv'd Lyes* that ever was made, wherein the Father of *Lyes*, according to his Cuſtom, withdrew *his politick Influence*, and left his wretched Agents to their *own Infatuations*.

For, is it likely that the *Deſponding* Diſciples of *Jeſus*, who were diſmay'd and ſcatter'd upon his Crucifixion, and durſt ſcarce ſhew themſelves, ſhou'd venture thro' ſo much Hazard and Difficulty to ſteal a *Dead Carkaſs*?

Can

Can it be reaſonably imagin'd, that a few *forlorn, naked, and unarm'd* Men, ſhou'd dare to attack the *Guards*, and force the *fortify'd* Sepulchre?

But (waving theſe, and a Thouſand more groſs Improbabilities) Who ſaw the Diſciples do this? or how do the Guard know it was ſo? --- Why, we are told that all this was done *while they ſlept: O ſtulta Inſania!* Fooliſh and beſotted Madneſs, to give Credit to *ſleeping Witneſſes!* If they ſlept, how cou'd they know it? and if they did not know it, how cou'd they witneſs it? But I ask pardon for inſiſting upon this ridiculous and exploded Report, which, if it need Confuting, confutes it ſelf.

But I have mention'd theſe things the better to introduce this *Inference*;

That no Cauſe is ſo *juſt*, no Truth ſo *evident*, but will ſometime or other be aſſaulted by *Malice*, and contradicted for *Money*. If the Innocence of the *Holy JESUS* cou'd not protect him, if the Evidence of his Reſurrection met with ſuch Cavellers and Gainſayers; nay, if the infinite Charming Goodneſs of his Nature was not ſufficient to *overcome Evil*, what can the beſt of us poor Mortals expect, when Malice and Covetouſneſs combine againſt us? *Infer.*

It is God's Goodneſs to us of this *Nation*, that poor perſecuted Righteouſneſs has juſter Cities of Refuge to flee unto than *Jeruſalem*. That City and her Courts were ſtain'd with the Blood, the innocent Blood of many of the Prophets, and of *the Anointed of the Lord*; Juſtice and Judgment were not to be found within *her Gates:* But bleſſed be God,

God, in *Our's*, generally ſpeaking, if we look to the Fountain and chief Conduits of Juſtice, we have no juſt Cauſe of *complaining in our Streets*; No, we muſt own with thankfulneſs, when we reflect upon *ſome Years* that are paſt, that *Judgment* now *runs down as clear as Water, and Righteouſneſs like a mighty Stream.*

Indeed if *We*, the Diſciples of *Chriſt*, were in this reſpect *as our Maſter*, we ſhou'd ſay *it is enough*, and be contented; but ſince his gracious Compaſſion to our Infirmities has plac'd us in a Land of Truth and Juſtice, we ſhou'd *enter into his Gates* of Judgment *with Thankſgiving*, as well as *into the Courts* of Sanctuary *with Praiſe*; we ſhou'd always *be thankful unto him, and ſpeak good of his Name.* But we muſt turn to our

II. *Second* Enquiry; Who they were that gave and receiv'd this Money? The *Givers* were no *worſe* (I mean, no *leſs Men*, for *worſe* there cou'd not be) than the Chief Prieſts, aſſembled with the Elders; or, in a Word, the *Sanhedrim*, the *great Senate*, or *High Court of Parliament* among the *Jews.* This is the higheſt Aggravation of their Wickedneſs: Their Numbers, their Dignity and Office, render their Crime more Conſpicuous and Abominable.

Had a few vile Wretches laid a *Plot* to propagate an Untruth, there had been nothing extraordinary in it; but that the whole *Governing part of a Nation*, that a Number of Prieſts, and Levites, and Scribes, with Seventy of the Elders or Judges of *Iſrael*, ſhou'd all ſhuffle and conſpire to *buy a Lye*, and that immediately after they had ſanctify'd the

the *Sabbath*, nay, and celebrated the great Feaſt of *Unleaven'd Bread* too, for *that Sabbath-Day was an high day*; that they who ſhou'd have been the publick *Advocates* of Truth and Righteouſneſs, ſhou'd be *Mendacii Sponſores*, the Betrothers of an impudent Calumny; that that Court which for its Authority, for ſome time pretended Power over their Kings, and for its Religious Reputation was by their *Rabbins* call'd *The Prop of true Doctrine*; that that Court, I ſay, ſhou'd be guilty of moſt baſe and horrid Forgery, wou'd ſcarce be believ'd in a Common-Wealth of honeſt Heathens.

But this ſhews the ſtrange Degeneracy and Corruption of the *Jewiſh* Church and State at this time, in which *Money* had the greateſt Stroke, foraſmuch as their very *High-Prieſthood* was bought and ſold: And it is obſerv'd of them, that they wou'd ſtake down their whole Religion to ſerve an *Intereſt*, a *Turn*, or a *Luſt*: They were Conſcientious in nothing but outward Rites; they kept the *outſide* of their Hands clean, but their *inſide* was full of Gifts.

Theſe baſe, inglorious Practices were the dreadful Symptoms of an impending Ruine, which always firſt appear in *ſlaviſh Minds*: Their Iniquity was well-nigh grown to the *full*; for ſo truly Diabolical were they in their Practices, that they *rejoyced in Iniquity*. When the Accurſed Traytor *Judas* commun'd with 'em, how he might betray his *Maſter*, they were *glad*, ſays the Text, and covenanted to give him *Money*.

And here I cannot but obſerve, to the Eternal Reproach of theſe *Jewiſh* Zealots, and all ſuch Hypocritical Workers of Iniquity, a generous Inſtance

Tull. de Offic. l. 1.

of Justice in the brave *old Romans*, in the case of *Pyrrhus*, related thus by *Cicero*; "There was a Fugitive "that made a Proposal to the Senate for the Poy- "soning and Dispatching of *Pyrrhus*; but the *Se-* "*nate* and *Fabricius* deliver'd up the Traytor to "his Master. Such was the Detestation they had "for Treachery, that they wou'd not make use of "it, tho' to the Destruction of a Powerful and In- "vading Enemy.

But so base and ignoble are these *Jewish Senates*, that they embrace and encourage a most perfidious *Traytor* against the *Prince of Peace*, and not only give Money to betray him to *Death*, but to murder the Fame of his Resurrection to *Life*.

These Men of Authority were the *Givers* of this Money, and the *Raisers* of this vain Report. Let us now examine the *Receivers of that*, and the *Reporters of this*.

These were some of the Common Soldiers in the *Roman* Garrison, Men of desperate Fortunes, and prostitute Consciences, *Vendible Souls*, that wou'd act any thing for Money, and Swear and Lye, as well as Kill, for their *daily Pay*.

Now 'tis no wonder that such common Mercenaries shou'd be *debauch'd*, when the *Lustfull Senators* make their *Court* to 'em, with their Right-hands full of Gifts. 'Tis no wonder that Slaves are the *Trumpeters* of a Lye, when they see the Lords of the Council are the *Leaders* and *Encouragers* to it. They knew they were but the *open Instruments* of their *Secret Malice*, and they were secur'd of Indemnity in case they were call'd to Account for their slothful Negligence, or deserting their Post; for thus their *Warrant* runs;

If

If this come to the governour's ears, we will perſuade him, and ſecure, or indemnify, *you.*

So have we known ſome *Knights of the Poſt*, when their Pardon has been ſecur'd before-hand, make wonderful Diſcoveries and Confeſſions of *Treaſon*, which they were never guilty of, only with a wicked Deſign to accuſe others as their Accomplices, and betray innocent Blood.

But yet, as to the caſe of the *Roman Hirelings*, I muſt confeſs 'tis matter of Wonder, notwithſtanding all theſe incouraging Inducements, how they ſhou'd be perſuaded to undertake this Drudgery of Lying againſt a *Truth*, which had ſo lately appear'd to 'em in ſo much *Majeſty* and *Glory*; a *Truth* which by its formidable Power, not only made their *Hearts to quake*, but the *Earth to tremble*: 'Tis a wonder, I ſay, that they who, to their utter Confuſion and Aſtoniſhment, had ſeen the *unweildy Stone* remov'd by a reſiſtleſs Hand, had felt the Earthquake, nay, had felt the more likely Effects of a Celeſtial Viſion, which ſtruck 'em as *Dead Men*, ſo that there remain'd no ſtrength in them; 'Tis a Wonder, I ſay again, how they cou'd *be diſobedient to the Heavenly Viſion*, how they cou'd be *hired to kick againſt the Pricks*, and to *fight againſt God*; when they might juſtly fear, that he who made the Earth to *tremble*, might as well make it *open its Mouth*, and ſwallow them up: This is a moſt amazing Inſtance of *audacious Wickedneſs!*

But, ſuch is is the Levity of Mercenary Soldiers, and ſuch the prevailing Power of *Money*, that it will attempt *any thing*; not only to take *Towns* without *Force*, and defeat *Armies* with a *Flying Story*, but

even to *change the Truth of God into a Lye:* So impudent and aſtoniſhing was this Undertaking of the Soldiers!

But yet when all is ſaid and done, their baſe juggling *Inſtructers* were moſt to blame, who forg'd this Lye, and countenan'd it by their Authority, and ſpread it *per organum Militaris Levitatis*, made the Levity and Inconſtancy of the Soldiers the *Trumpet* of their ſpiteful Invention. —— But too much of this;

Let us now ſee what *Inferences* this *Second Enquiry* will afford, and for Brevity-ſake, among ſeveral others, I will only take notice of this One;

Infer. How *dangerous* as well as *baſe* a thing it is, for *Great Men* to interpoſe their *Authority* in the Caſe of Subornation and Bribery. Money may do Miſchief enough of it-ſelf, but when 'tis animated and ſtrengthened with Authority, it will even take up *Arms* againſt *Heaven*.

It was the Power and Authority of the *Sanhedrim* that encourag'd ſuch an Attempt as the World never before heard of, *to ſtop the Sun from Riſing*; and when he was riſen, to blind the Eyes of all Mankind with the *Duſt* of an *idle Report*.

It was by the ſame means of Money and Authority that *Balak* and his Princes prevail'd in ſome meaſure with the blinded Peophet againſt the Word of Truth; and,

Thus, Falſe Accuſers are aid'd with Eaſe, and ride on without controul, when *Money* has *Magiſtracy* on its ſide.

But it is well obſerv'd by the Judicious Biſhop *Sanderſon*, "That as Magiſtrates are *petty Gods*,

"God

"God having lent 'em his Name; ſo Falſe Accuſers "are *petty Devils*, the Devil having borrow'd theirs, "Διάβολος, the Accuſer of the Brethren: For a "Magiſtrate then to countenance a Sycophant, "what is it elſe, ſays he, but as it were to pervert "the Courſe of Nature, and make God take the "Devil's part?

But here again, we of this Nation have ſingular Reaſon to bleſs God, that tho' the *laſt Generation* was almoſt, if not altogether, as ignominious for a bloody corrupt Magiſtracy, and *Sham-Courts of Juſtice*, as ever the *Jewiſh* Nation was, yet it pleaſed the Lord *to reſtore our judges as at the firſt, and our counſellors as at the beginning, and to make our Zion a city of righteouſneſs.* 1 Sam. 1. 26.

But, alas! there are too many ways to pervert Juſtice, beſides Corruption in Authority; for, as the aforeſaid Prelate excellently obſerves, Though a Judge be never ſo honeſtly minded, never ſo zealous of the Truth, never ſo careful to do Right, yet if there be (as there always will be) ſome ſpiteful Accuſer or other that will ſuggeſt any thing, or an audacious Witneſs that will ſwear any thing, or a crafty Pleader that will maintain any thing, or a tame Jury that will ſwallow any thing, or a craving Clerk or Officer, that for a Bribe will foiſt in any thing; the Judge, who is ty'd to proceed *ſecundum allegata & probata*, cannot with his beſt Care and Wiſdom prevent, but ſometimes Juſtice will be perverted, Innocency oppreſs'd, and the Guilty Juſtified. But —— I'm ſenſible that I've ſpent too much time in theſe two firſt *Enquiries*, and therefore ſhall make ſhorter work with the other Two that follow. *Ser.* II. *ad Magiſtrat.*

Now

Now that which falls under our

III. *Third Enquiry* is, What Reward was here given? And here both the *Quale* and the *Quantum* are obſervable; here is *Money* given, and *large Money*.

Money, one of the moſt uſeful Inventions for Trade and Merchandiſe under the Sun, is perverted to more groſs Abuſes, and miſchievous Purpoſes than any *one thing* whatſoever.

Particularly, it has carry'd on moſt of the Wars againſt Truth, that Malice or blind Zeal have ever rais'd.

And no wonder, that it ſhou'd prove ſuch an Enemy to *Truth*, when, for the Corruption of Mankind, the Father of *Lyes* is made the grand Adminiſtrator of it, and therefore is entituled Πλοῦτος, The God of *Riches*; and *Covetouſneſs is his* Catholick *Worſhip*, which is *Idolatry*.

With this ſecret Inchantment, this bewitching Temptation, the *God of this World* has gain'd *Proſelytes* of all Degrees and Profeſſions. The Infection is Epidemical, from the loweſt to the higheſt; from the *Atheiſt* to the *Religious Zealot*, we find ſome tainted with the impious Contagion; even the Wiſe and the Righteous have been ſometimes dazled with it: Therefore the Words of the Law
Deut. 16. 19 are an excellent *Caveat* in this Caſe, *Thou ſhalt not wreſt judgment, nor take a gift; for a gift does blind the eyes* even *of the* Wiſe, *and perverts the words of the* Righteous.

The *Accurſed Thing* is not only to be found in *Achan*'s Tent, but in the Camp of *Saul*; nor is the Prophet's Servant *Gehazi* only vitiated with this

this Leproſie, but *Balaam*, a Prophet of the Lord is blinded with it: For tho' God had told him poſitively that he ſhou'd not curſe the People *Iſrael*, yet a ſecond Meſſage from *Balak*, with mighty Promiſes of Promotion, and double Rewards of Divination tempt him *to enquire again of God.*

But I need not produce theſe leſſer Inſtances of corrupt Practices wrought by *Money*, when this was *the Reward* that was *taken* againſt the *Innocent*; this was the *tempting Fruit*, which the *Serpentine Senators* made uſe of to deſtroy our Faith in the *Second Adam*; this was the Silver Hook wherewith they drew in the greedy Soldiers to execute their wicked Project; this the only *Lure* that cou'd have brought thoſe *Birds of Prey* to their *Hand.*

I ſhall not throw in that aggravating Obſervation which ſome Expoſitors with probability enough make, that this *Subornation* was accompany'd with *Sacrilege*, reck'ning that this Covenant was made with Money dedicated to pious Uſes, or appropriated to the Service of the Temple: But, —— be it as it will,

We are aſſur'd that it was a *round Summ* of Money which was given; for ſo our Evangeliſt tells us, that when they had taken Council, they gave *large Money* unto the Soldiers, ἀργύρια ἱκανὰ, Money ſufficient to ſatisfie them all to carry on the Deſign without Scruple; and that ſure muſt be no *ſmall Summ* for ſo *hard a Task*, to uphold a Lye of that *ſize* ſtood in need of *large Money.* V. 1.

But here it is worth obſerving, how much this Caballing Aſſembly gave for a *Lye*, and how *little* for the Lord of *Truth*, when they purchas'd him of the Traytor. It is well obſerv'd alſo by one, that theſe

theſe crafty *Senators*, *cum avariſſimi ſint*, *Mendacium tamen & Damnationem emunt*; tho' they were infamouſly and deadly Covetous, yet they gave *freely* and *generouſly* for a damnable Lye. Thus Malice makes even Self-intereſt ſubject to it, nay, makes the *covetous Miſer* turn *Prodigal*.

But yet, tho' Malice laid this wicked Plot, 'twas Money that put it in Execution, from whence I wou'd make this ſhort *Inference*;

That of all the various *Inducements* wherewith the wicked World aboundeth, to diſcredit Truth, and pervert Juſtice, there is none ſo *prevalent* and *effectual* as *Money*: All the Wit of Men, and Malice of Devils cou'd not here find out ſuch another *Expedient*.

There are indeed other *Tools* which the Workers of Iniquity make conſiderable uſe of; *Obſequiouſneſs* and *fear of Diſpleaſure*, which creates *ſneaking Complyances*, are too common *Inſtruments* in the Hands of the Enemies of Truth; and *Envy*, *Hatred*, and *Malice* may do Miſchief enough, eſpecially when ſo deeply wrought into Men's Compoſition, as in the Inſtance before us.

But tho' Men be miſchievous and wicked enough of themſelves, yet are there even in *corrupt Nature* ſuch Impreſſions of the common Principles of Truth and Juſtice, that Men would not often tell a Lye *gratis*, nor do an *ill thing* for *nothing*; Thouſands of ill Deſigns, and illegal Practices wou'd *miſcarry*, if it was not for the *Midwifery* of *Money*.

Hence particularly ariſe that miſchievous *Pair*, which conſpire to propagate Falſhood, *Subornation*, and *Perjury*; the Cry of both which is heard in this

this *Covenant*; the former is notorious, and the latter plainly imply'd; for what the Watch diſcover'd and declar'd before the Chief Prieſts, and was afterwards debated in Council before the whole *Sanhedrim*, can, I think, be interpreted no leſs than *Depoſitions upon Oath*, being given before the Higheſt Court of Judicature among the *Jews*; and therefore their ſubſequent Covenant to contradict what they had ſaid, ſeems to have all the *Formalities* of *Perjury*.

In ſuch ſad *Solemnities* was this *accurſed Covenant* ſtruck up with Money. I will ſay no more, but ſince the Coveting after *That* betray'd the *Chriſt* of God, let it not be once named among us, as becometh Chriſtians. Eph. 5. 3.

I now proceed to the

Fourth and laſt Article of *Enquiry*, namely, How this *hopeful Bargain* was perform'd?

And here, it ſeems, theſe Mercenary Slaves, theſe Obſequious, Officious Lyars, tho' they were *falſe to God and Conſcience*, yet they were *true to the Treacherous Covenant*, and *faithful* Servants *to the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*; *They took the money, and did as they were taught.*

They acted, or rather were *acted* as *Machines*, in which *Money* was the principal *Wheel* or *Spring* of Motion. They that put the *Money* in their *Hands* put the *Words* into their *Mouths*; ſuch Words as were indeed hard to be ſwallow'd and digeſted, being an Indictment and Accuſation againſt *themſelves*, in which, if there had been any Truth, we cannot doubt but it wou'd have put theſe *warm*

Sticklers upon an immediate *search* in all the Disciples Houses, for the *stoll'n Body*; and the *Roman Officers*, who were severe *Exacters of Military Discipline*, wou'd infallibly have made the sleepy Watch *Examples* for neglecting their Post: But a little *Underhand-dealing* compounds for all this; and the Soldiers, encourag'd with large Gifts, and back'd with Authority, *say after their Teachers*; and so the Bargain is perform'd.

And by this means, as many *as had a mind to be deceiv'd*, were deceiv'd with a sottish idle Story, which our Evangelist tells us was commonly reported among the *Jews* at the time of his Writing the Gospel; and I know not whether this μεγα ῥηημα, this *Monstrous Fable*, this *lusty-lying-wonder* do not obtain among that infatuated People unto this day. A just Judgment upon 'em *who receiv'd not the love of the truth that they might be saved*; *for which cause* 2 Thes. 2. 10. *God sent them a* strong Delusion, says the Apostle, *that they shou'd believe a lye, that they might all be damn'd who believ'd not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

But after all, this Bargain was not so *thorowly* perform'd. Malice and Money by their powerful *Confederacy*, held out for some time, and may do still in some dark Corners of the World, against the Truth, but (generally speaking) Truth in this Action prov'd too strong for 'em both, and triumph'd in spite of 'em. All their *Machinations* soon spent themselves in the *Air*, without doing any considerable Execution.

In plain *English*; this wicked Plot was not so closely carry'd on, but the Fraud came to *Pilate's* Ear, and, notwithstanding the *Engagement* that was made

made by the *Sanhedrim to perſuade him*, yet he had ſo much more Ingenuity than they, that he confeſſes and declares the whole *Intrigue* to his Imperial Maſter *Tiberius*, in a *Letter* which is yet extant in the Hiſtory of the *Centuriators*, part of which I will here give, becauſe it is a Confirmation of all the Evangelical Story. *Cent.* 1. l. 1. c. 10.

Illi autem (principes Judeorum) crucifixerunt eum, &c. *i. e.* "The Rulers of the *Jews* crucified this *Jeſus*, "and placed a Guard to keep him in the Sepul- "chre: But he, while my Soldiers were upon the "Watch, roſe the third Day; but ſo hot was the "crafty Malice of the *Jews*, that they gave Mo- "ney to the Guard, to ſay that his Diſciples ſtole "away his Body: But when they had receiv'd the "Money, for receive it they did, *tacere non potue-* "*runt*, they cou'd neither keep Council nor Si- "lence, for they teſtify'd not only that they ſaw "him riſe again, but that they receiv'd Money of "the *Jews* to ſay the contrary.

This is agreeable to what *Joſephus*, *Euſebius*, and others relate in this Matter. And here we ſee the whole Myſtery of Iniquity laid open, tho' the Soldiers had taken Money againſt the Truth, yet they cou'd not conceal it long, much leſs diſguiſe it with a Lye: They ſoon found it too hard for 'em to kick againſt the Pricks of Conſcience, and *reſiſt the Majeſty* of Truth. *Joſ. Am. Jud.* l. 18 c. 4. *Euſeb.* l. 2. c. 2.

And this agrees with the other Interpretation which ſome give of this *Saying which was commonly reported among the Jews*, *viz.* not that the Diſciples ſtole him away, but that the Soldiers were hired to ſay ſo.

And ſo I leave the Matter before your Judgment, and ſhall conclude this laſt Article with one brief *Inference.*

That tho' Innocence may be arraign'd, and Truth ſully'd for a ſeaſon, by *proſperous Deceits* and *Conſpiracies*, yet a *Lying Tongue*, and bought Evidence, *is but for a Moment.* *Truth* e'er long ſhall even *ſpring out of the Earth*, like Plants and Flowers after a ſtormy Winter; and *Righteouſneſs ſhall look down* and diſcover it ſelf *from Heaven.* Like the Sun after a ſhort Eclipſe, it ſhall recover its full Glory, and then the *Face* of them that *forge Lyes* ſhall be confounded, and the *Mouth* of them that *ſpeak thoſe Lyes* ſhall be ſtopped.

Pſal. 85. 11.

And certainly if the *Vanity* and *Danger* of this thing were well conſider'd, how theſe evil Inſtruments do in the End prove *Bruta fulmina*, inſignificant Flaſhes, and being over-charg'd with *Malice* and *Lyes*, *that* the Powder, *theſe* the Balls, do *recoil*, and fly foul in the Faces of their Inventors; there wou'd need no other Diſcouragement to Suborners, and falſe Witneſſes.

I exhort therefore,

Firſt of all, that the *Giver* of Bribes wou'd conſider, that tho' he may at preſent raiſe thick *Miſts of Error* with Money, yet the *piercing Beams of Truth* will ſoon break thro' all *reſiſtance.*

However, *reſiſtleſs Death* (which comes poſting on) cannot be *brib'd*, nor the laſt *Judgment corrupted.* All Diſguiſes and Vizards ſhall then be pluck'd off, and both Truth and Falſhood appear in their *proper Colours.*

Colours. All Wicked Conſpiracies ſhall be detected, Lyes confounded, Malice and Envy arraign'd and condemn'd, and the Money of Suborners periſh with 'em. —— For if *Simon the Sorcerer* had ſuch a juſt Sentence of Condemnation paſs'd upon him, for attempting to purchaſe the Spirit of *Truth* with *Money*, what ſhall become of them who give Money to Licenſe a *Lye?*

St. *John* has ſhew'd them their Place, and Portion, and wretched Partners, *Rev.* 22. 15. declaring that *whoſoever loveth and maketh a lye, ſhall not enter in thro' the gates into the heavenly City, but ſhall have their portion with dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters.*

Again, I exhort, that the *Receivers* of Bribes wou'd all conſider what the Law ſays, *Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witneſs*; what the Goſpel ſaith, *What ſhall it profit thee if thou ſhalt gain the whole world, and loſe thine own Soul?* and what Conſcience ſays, *Is there not a lye in thy right hand?* Exod. 23. 1. Mark 8. 36.

And what is it, thou vile abject Creature, that thou receiveſt in Exchange for thy Soul? What? A corruptible Vanity for an immortal Subſtance; a *Royal Image* and Superſcription ſtamp'd upon *Earthly Metal* for the glorious *Image of God*, ſtamp'd upon the *Soul?* And, Alas! is there any proportion betwixt White or Yellow Earth, and a Celeſtial Life? Can you purchaſe an *Inheritance incorruptible* with that which *Ruſt corrupteth?* or the *Rewards of Righteouſneſs* with the *Price of Iniquity?* Can you procure Indulgencies in Hell for Money? or repeal an irreverſible Sentence? or commute for infinite Puniſhments? or even in this Life, Will ill-gotten Wealth

Wealth purchase Peace of Mind, or satisfie the insatiate *Worm* which gnaws upon a guilty Conscience?

O God, that Men shou'd *hunger* for that which is not *Bread!* and unlawfully covet that which profitteth not! that those inestimable *Jewels* Truth and Righteousness, Soul and Conscience shou'd be *barter'd* for Money!

Think then, think, foolish Wretch, what a sorry Bargain thou art making, when thou art hiring thy self to do mischief by telling a Lye, swearing falsely, and the like. Be not so easily catch'd with the dazling Temptation; remember the dangerous *Hook* before you swallow the *Bait*; consider the *Curse* before you pluck the *forbidden Fruit*; tho' the *Serpent* encircling the Branches appear with *Silver Scales*, yet he carries a deadly *Sting*: and this sure will check thy *heaving Inclinations.*

Finally, I exhort that we all seriously consider the Desolation which befel the *Jewish* Church and State for their harden'd Malice and sinister Practices, that the Judgments which befel them may be a Warning to this Land, and their Misery a Motive to our Amendment.

If we that profess our Faith in *Christ's Resurrection*, imitate the Wickedness and Treachery of those Murderers, whose Malice pursu'd him *beyond the Grave*, What is, if this be not, to *Crucifie the Son of God afresh?* If our Inclinations and Customs be so Mercenary, what are we better than the *Jews* who worshipped the Golden Calves? Our Covetousness, *as Christians*, is as gross *Idolatry* as theirs.

I

I wiſh, indeed, that *Jeruſalem* had been the *laſt Scene* of infamous Corruption in this kind; that theſe ſhameful Impieties had been peculiar to the *Jews*; ſo that neither the like Sins nor Judgments might be repeated any more.

But, alas! how little do many Men of *unclean Hands* now-a-days conſider why that *Congregation of Hypocrites was* ſo miſerably *made Deſolate, and how Fire conſum'd thoſe Tabernacles of Bribery!* How little do they think of the Obſervation of the Son of *Syrach*, that *becauſe of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is tranſlated from one people to another!* How little do they now think of, or regard what the Lord God of *Iſrael* ſays, *There is an* Accurſed Thing *in the midſt of thee O Iſrael: Thou canſt not ſtand before thine Enemies, until ye take away* the Accurſed Thing *from among you.* Jos. 7. 13.

But —— ſince the King *by Judgment* is now *eſtabliſhing the Land*, what have we more to do? but with fervency unite our Prayers to God, *by whom Kings reign*, and the *Judges of the Earth decree Juſtice*,

That it may pleaſe him to bleſs and keep the Magiſtrates, *giving them Grace to execute* Juſtice, *and maintain* Truth, as it is in Jeſus, and let *All the People ſay*, Amen.

F I N I S.